

Preface

A "Scouts Own" is an inspirational ceremony, usually built around a central theme, such as friendship, world peace, save the earth, or appreciation of the world around us. Just about any topic consistent with the principles and program goals of Scouting is appropriate.

In execution, a "Scouts Own" can range from lively to somber. The intent is generally serious, however, and usually reflective. Texts used can be spontaneously made up or taken from existing literature. If readings from sacred works (scripture) are incorporated, boys should be encouraged to choose passages that are less likely to offend (such as, not referring to the Deity by a name identified with a specific religion). [Remember *pluralism*.]

Here are suggestions that can help make a "Scouts Own" successful:

- Hold it somewhere away from normal activities. In a meeting place, go to a corner that is not otherwise used.
- Have a *gateway*. As the group files into the Scouts Own area (single or double) through this gateway, nobody speaks unless absolutely necessary (and then only in hushed tones). This makes it a serious ceremony, rather than a get-together, with a lot of chatter.
- The gateway can be two chairs, two people or a chalk line on the floor. The idea is that you are going to a special place to have a special kind of ceremony.
- After the ceremony is over, the group returns through this gateway silently.

An Ancient Prayer

Give us, Lord, a bit o' sun
A bit o' work and a bit o' fun;
Give us all in th' struggle and splutter
Our daily bread and a bit o' butter.

Give us health, our keep to make
An' a bit to spare for poor folks sake;
Give us sense, for we're some of us
duffers,
An' a heart to feel for all that suffers.

Give us, too, a bit of a song,
An' a tale, and a book to help us along,
An' give us our share o' sorrow's lesson
That we may prove how grief's a blessing.

Give us, Lord, a chance to be
Our goodly best, brave, wise and free,
Our goodly best for ourselves and others
Till all men learn to live as brothers. Amen.

An Opening

As our music cheers us, so be the melody of our lives;
As our mirth unites us, so be the harmony of our hearts;
As our spirits rise to the lilt of our song, so may the Great
Spirit uplift us to renewed endeavor;
And may the happy fellowship of this circle go out into all the world.

A Closing

Wood and water ... wind and tree
Wisdom ... Strength ... and courtesy
Scouting's spirit go with thee.

The Black Door

There's a Middle Eastern story of a spy who had been captured and sentenced to death by a general of the Persian army. The general had fallen upon a strange and rather bizarre custom. He permitted the condemned person to make a choice. He could either face the firing squad or pass through the black door.

As the moment of execution drew near, the general ordered the spy to be brought before him for a short, final interview, the primary purpose of which was to receive the answer of the doomed man to the question: "Which shall it be---the firing squad or the black door?"

This was not an easy question, and the prisoner hesitated, but soon he made it known that he much preferred the firing squad. Not long thereafter, a volley of shots in the courtyard announced the grim sentence had been fulfilled. The general, staring at his boots, turned to his aide and said, "You see how it is with men; they will always prefer the known way to the unknown. It is characteristic of people to be afraid of the undefined. And yet I gave him his choice."

"What lies behind the black door?" asked the aide.

"Freedom," replied the general, "and I've known only a few men brave enough to take it."

Like so many stories out of the Middle East, this one carries a pretty hefty message. The first is, of course, that we will often choose the familiar, even if it's undesirable, over the unknown, which might be a wonderful opportunity. And second, that few people are brave enough to choose freedom.

I'm not saying we should reject the familiar---not by any means. But we should question the familiar. Just because it's familiar doesn't make it good, better, or the best thing to do.

When you heard the story about the black door, you probably said to yourself, "I would have chosen the black door. I would have had nothing to lose; the firing squad was certain death." And most people would say the same thing. But actually faced with the choice, would you? How many doors to freedom have we passed up during our lives because we tend to cling so fiercely to the familiar?

How many times have events come about that we worried and stewed about--- even thought calamitous at the time---and that later proved to be blessings in disguise? Each of them was a black door through which we passed to greater freedom. But at the time, we would have chosen to keep things as they were if we had been given the chance.

At any rate, it's one of those stories that makes for interesting discussion at the dinner table, or with friends. Tell the story of the black door, and see what sort of reaction you get.

It's good to remember, if we can, that it is often those things we worry about and most fear that turn out to be blessings in disguise.

The Blind Ones and the Matter of the Elephant

The following Sufi tale is contained in the book *Tales of the Dervishes*, by Idries Shah.

Beyond Ghor there was a city. All its inhabitants were blind. A king with his entourage arrived near by; he brought his army and camped in the desert. He had a mighty elephant, which he used in attack and to increase the people's awe. From among this blind community messengers ran like fools to find it.

As they did not even know the form or shape of the elephant they groped sightlessly, gathering information by touching some part of it. Each thought that he knew something, because he could feel a part.

When they returned to their fellow citizens, eager groups clustered around them. Each of these was anxious, misguidedly, to learn the truth from those who were themselves astray. They asked about the form, the shape of the elephant, and listened to all that they were told.

The man whose hand had reached an ear was asked about the elephant's nature. He said: 'It is a large, rough thing, wide and broad, like a rug.'

And the one who had felt the trunk said: 'I have the real facts about it. It is like a straight and hollow pipe, awful and destructive.'

The one who had felt its feet and legs said: 'It is mighty and firm, like a pillar.'

Each had felt one part out of many. Each had perceived it wrongly. No mind knew all: knowledge is not the companion of the blind. All imagined something, something incorrect. The created are not informed about divinity. There is no way in the science by means of the ordinary intellect.

Carry the Sun Inside You

Within you lies a creative, resourceful person.

You have qualities that get better every day.

You have the Courage and strength to see things through.

You have a light that shines inside you.

You have known the truth of yesterday,

...and you have an inner map that will lead the way to a beautiful tomorrow.

You have gifts that have never even been opened

...and personal journeys waiting to be explored.

You have SO much going for you.

You are a special person,

...and you have a future that is in the best of hands.

And you need to remember:

If you have plans you want to act on and dreams you've always wanted to come true,
You have what it takes, because YOU HAVE YOU!

Children Are Children All Over The World

Children are children all over the world
They share the same big sky of blue
They share the same sun and the wind and the rain
The moon, and the same stars as you
They find games to play, just like you, everyday
They have birthdays and holidays, too
Did you ever think children all over the world
Are just little children like you?

Closing Prayers

Oh lord, help us to carry your spirit in our lives,
That we may share it with other by living it ourselves.
Help us to offer what we have and what we are in your service.
And help us to embody the spirit of Scouting so that it will live on through us.
--From "A Memorial to a Scouter" by Laird Vanni.

May the spirits of the just,
Made perfect in their suffering,
Teach us in our turn,
To serve as we ought:
To give and not to count the cost,
To love and not to heed the wounds,
To serve and not to seek for rest,
To strive and not to seek for any reward,
Save that of knowing that we keep our promise true.
--Adapted from a Rover Prayer.

Creed for a Tree

Each of the following messages is designed to be placed at the foot different natural object (preferably a tree), and read when discovered (as during a "night eyes" exercise). Also, the entire set of messages can be used, or one or more messages used separately, as part of any ceremony.

I am a Sign [Scout Sign]: I am a sign of allegiance, a signal of respect. I am made with the right hand, the arm of authority. By my sign, Scout and adults declare to "do their best". I signal to strive for reverence, patriotism, goodwill, and self-respect. I am an open pledge pointing to the sky and facing many in the presence of others. I am held by those who are thoughtful, attentive, and confident that Scouts and adults will accomplish together what they cannot do alone. I am a deep wish inside a boy who thinks of his duty; I am the conviction of a leader who knows how challenging their duty is, Together, they form a partnership to live what can be done together, with the help of the Almighty.

I am a Handclasp [Handshake]: I am a handclasp. In a world of barriers and no-man's lands, I reach out to offer a peace pact. I am more than a simple greeting. I am two hands locked like one, uniting fellow Scouts, friends, neighbors, sisters and brothers. I am not done behind the back but face to face. It is my job to keep two

people facing one another and not taking the other for granted. I am also reserved for those special times when people want to communicate things like "congratulations, well done" or "blessings be with you".

I am a Compass: I am a compass. I lead the lost to safety. In the hand of a Scout, I bring the North Star before his eyes. In field and forest I mark a path for him as clear as a road map. By degrees, he finds his way to treasures, campsites, and safely home. I am the guide in the palm of his hand. With me, he tests the four corners of the earth and can go confidently forth on great voyages of discovery. I can show him time. With me he can read the direction of distance and the hour of the stars. By me he knows he has a purpose on earth and has been put here to find it.

I am a Knot: I come in many varieties, such as bowline, half hitch, square, and sheet bend. I am used on land as well as sea by rescuers, sailors, sportsmen, and campers. If tied properly, I do not tighten up, slip, or jam. I have helped many to be pulled to safety without hurting. I am on the fingertips of millions. I can sometimes be done in the dark or tied with one hand. I can tie up a boat, fasten down a tent, or wrap a package. I can be a child's chair, a sling on an injured arm, or a decorative necklace. I am for games, races, and for saving of life. I am with those who rescue and those who are rescued. I can be learned, and used by those who wish to jog their memories. Those who learn to tie me know my purpose. Those who know me best use me to help themselves and to serve others.

I am a Neckerchief [Bandana]: I am a neckerchief on duty, double duty. My duty is to the troop, to be a bond in color and design, binding them together. My other duty is to serve in fun and in pain. I can be a bandage, sling, and a dressing on the head, hand, or foot. In extreme emergency I can be a tourniquet, and have been known to save lives. Whether holding a splint, or keeping a troop occupied in games, I am a neckerchief. I am a garment, a tag, a sign, and I serve. I am like a marker around a boy's neck, fun at his feet, and mercy in his hands.

I am a Flag: I am a flag, folded or unfolded. I am on the way up in the early morning, and on the way down before sunset. I am folded as carefully as a mother will fold a cloth napkin, and am laid in some noble spot - with blue and white stars around me. I am held with care like a father holding a newborn son. I am history, shrunk into a single cloth, colored **red**, **white**, and **blue**. I am patriotic heroes and adventure held together in a pattern of stars and stripes. I remind people of the past and the future. I wave high in the wind and I swell their pride in the present. I remind them of their country's founders, whose great deeds deserve praise. I am a sign that says in one look what cannot be contained in libraries of books. I am a sign that national cemeteries cannot contain, even with all their headstones. I am a sign that even the national anthem cannot contain in all of its four stanzas. I am sign that is inexhaustible.

I am a fire: I am a fire, and a steady breath is my draft and my chimney. I am begun with a match and a bit of dry tinder. I am the pride of the one who sets me in the middle of a ten-foot circle. I am a bed of glowing embers that make people bend their knees to see me close. I turn a flame into a layer of coals, a pile of sticks into a campfire, and a cold pit into a hot oven. I come in layers of sticks, tinder, kindling, and fuel, and consume everything from cattle droppings to milkweed. Whether a crisscross

or teepee fire lay, I am lit from the windward side. In hiking meals or campouts, I cook shish kabob on pointed sticks and bake potatoes in the ground. I turn open earth into a kitchen, and can keep people eating and on duty for hours. I warm their hearth at sunset, and dry their clothes after a rain.

As I begin with pride, so I am extinguished with and care. My wet ashes are turned back into the earth. I come and go as surely as do the sun and the stars. At the end of the day, I am remembered and photographed. I am a wonder of creation and rank high on the list of things people wish for.

Do Good

Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,

At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.

Fellowship

These are the things I prize and hold of dearest worth,
Light of the sapphire skies, peace of the silent hills.
Music of the birds, murmur of little rills,
Shelter of forests, comfort of the grass.
Shadows of clouds that swiftly pass, and after the shower
The smell of flowers and of the good brown earth.
And most of all, along the way, FELLOWSHIP and mirth,
May naught mar the joy of FELLOWSHIP here.
May none remain hungry and lonely of heart among us,
Let none go hence without the joy of new FRIENDSHIP.
Give us more capacity for love,
And a richer consciousness of being loved.
Help us overcome our coldness and reserve that we may throw ajar, The gates of our hearts and keep open house this day and ALWAYS.

For the Campfire

Opening:

The life of a fire is like the life of a person. In its infancy, it is faint and weak and must be carefully nourished and tended. As it catches, it crawls and spreads like a child exploring its world. In its adolescence, it flares fast and bright, racing for new height. Soon, it will burn with the steady heat and light of its adulthood.

Closing:

A fire, in its later life, goes dim. No longer does it have the fierce brightness of its youth. Still, it gives a gentle, steady warmth, just as an elderly man or woman shares the warmth of understanding and the steadiness of experience.

And, this is a fact of life: all things must die. The memory of those passed on lives deep and dear in our hearts. This fire will fade to cold ash, but its flame will glow in our memory.

For those

Now let us bow our heads in reverence:

For those who are afraid of the future---may they have confidence.

For those who have failed---may they have a fresh chance.

For those who doubt---may they not despair.

For those who are alone---may they find someone.

For those who hunger---may they be satisfied.

For those who are satisfied---may they be humble.

Friend of the Earth

What does it mean to be a friend of the earth? To be a friend usually means to have a relationship with another person. The very idea of being a friend of the earth is an expansion of the words' meaning. Friendship is a relationship, a relationship which is not extractive, but giving.

The earth asks very little of us-and yet it asks everything. To be a friend of the earth you must first make an offering of yourself-of your feelings. It must be an unconditional offer, generated out of affection.

How will you know if the earth responds? How will you learn if the earth joins you in these feelings? These are very different questions to answer, but we do have signs.

The earth will send clean waters and bird songs. It will fill the ocean with melodies and whales. It will send clean air and sharp edges, tasty greens and ripe, sweet fruit. It will flood the night with moonbeams.

All the earth asks is love and caring, nurturing and respect. It asks that you not overpower its capacity for regeneration. It asks for slow changes. It asks for humility. If you are its friend, the earth will know...and will respond.

-- Allan Gussow, President of the Friends of the Earth Foundation (quoted in Canadian Guider, March/April 1986)

Friendship

F is for friends that you can trust

R is relying on those being trusted

I is for including, and not excluding

E is for everyone you must include

N is for nice, so don't be nasty

D is for dear friends you must be

S is for saying what you like, and not what you hate

H is for helping those in need

I is for importance for everyone

P is for peace, and not for war

Friendship

I don't want to change you;

You know better than I what is best for you:

I don't want you to change me;

I only want you to accept me and respect my way;
Then our friendship will be rich,
Based on reality, not a dream.
--13th century Chinese thought

Ah, the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person, having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but pouring them out, just as they are, chaff and grain together, certain that a faithful hand will take them, sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and then, with a breath of kindness, blow the rest away.

From the Diary of Anne Frank

"It's really a wonder that I haven't dropped all my ideals because they seem so absurd and impossible to carry out. Yet, I keep them, because in spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart. I simply can't build up my hopes on a foundation consisting of confusion, misery, and death. I see the world gradually being turned into a wilderness, I hear the ever-approaching thunder, which will destroy us too, I can feel the sufferings of millions and yet, if I look up into the heavens, I think that it will all come right, that this cruelty too will end, and that peace and tranquility will return again."

From 1942 to 1944, Anne Frank and her family hid from the Nazis in Amsterdam. They were captured in August 1944 and sent to various concentration camps. At the age of 16, Anne died of typhus in the camp at Belsen; a month later, the camp was liberated.

The Gift of the Trees

We all know (don't we?) that happiness comes from giving to others.

Long ago, when the Great Spirit first put human beings on earth, people were concerned and afraid. "Where will we find food and water?" they asked. The trees laughed softly. "We are your sisters," they said. "We will help you."

The maple tree spoke up: "I will give you sweet water to drink and make into sugar." The elm tree said, "Use my soft bark to make your baskets and tie them together with my tough cords." The hickory tree said, "My cousins and I will fill your baskets with sweet nuts." And she called the chestnut, beech, and walnut to help. The great pine tree whispered softly, "When you get tired, I will make you a bed. My cousins the balsam and cedar will help me."

There was sunshine in the people's hearts as they set out to explore their new world. But soon they came to a deep, wide river. "How will we ever cross the river?" they asked. The trees laughed and laughed. "Take my white skin," said the birch. "Sew it together with the cords of the elm tree and you can make a boat that will carry you across the widest river."

When the sun crossed the sky to his lodge in the west, the people felt cold. Then the balsam fir tree whispered, "Good people, there is much sunfire in my heart. Rub my branches together and you will make a fire." So the people made fire. And that night

they slept soundly on the branches of the great pine tree. The north wind blew cold, but there was sunshine in the hearts of the people.

Now when children ask how they can repay the friendship of the trees, a wise person answers, "They do not ask for payment. But you can give trees your care and attention. You can give love and care to every plant and flower---that makes your life beautiful."

Scout Benediction

Go in peace and let your hearts be gay,
Go in peace, now at the close of the day.

In friendship we part, and until we meet
again,
God bless and keep you, Scouts, Amen.

Scout Prayer

Grant, O Lord, we pray thee,
That thy blessing may rest upon us and all other Scouts,
Help us with thy grace to serve our country
and keep our Scout Promise and Law.
Make us humble and friendly, eager for adventure,
Alert and prepared for service,
Give us the courage to dare to do right,
Make us both strong to fight and steadfast to endure,
And may our lives be filled with the joy that spreads happiness everywhere.

The Hand I sought

With outstretched arms I stood today,
To touch a hand not far away.
Yes, far in miles but close in thought,
The hand of a brother Scout I sought.

And so today we set aside
That every Scout and Every Guide,
Might think of brothers o'er the sea,
Brothers to you and brothers to me.

And he in turn reached out to me,
With brother Guides far o'er the sea,
And he and they and you and I,
Together a friendship know shall tie.

That we might stop and realize
A fact we often do not prize,
That with Scouts from every land,
We form one mighty friendship band.

For though we may not speak the same,
Together we all share one aim.
We all believe, as well we should,
In our Boy Scout brotherhood.

With outstretched arms I stood today,
With brother Scouts I kneeled to pray,
Touched in prayer and heart and thought
The hand of a brother Scout I sought.

Harm Me Not

I am the heart of your hearth on the cold winter nights; the friendly shade, which screens you from the summer sun; and my fruits quench your thirst as you journey on.

I am the beam which supports your house, the board of your table, the bed on which you sleep and the timber which builds your boat.

I am the handle of your hoe, the door of your home, the wood of your cradle and the shell of your coffin. I am the bread of kindness and the flower of beauty.

You who pass by, please listen to my prayer: **Harm Me Not!**

--The forest reserves of Portugal are said have been posted with this notice for more than a thousand years!

Have the Time

Allow Us Oh Lord:

To have the time to work, which is the price of success.

To have the time to think, which is the fountain of power.

To have the time to plan, which is the secret of perpetual youth.

To have the time to read, which is the fountain of eternal wisdom.

To have the time for friendship, which is the road to happiness.

To have the time to dream, which is to drive our carriage to the star.

To have the time to love and to be loved, which is a privilege of the gods.

To have the time to look around us, the day is too short to be self-centered.

To have the time to laugh, which is the music of the soul.

The Human Touch

'Tis the human touch in this world that counts,

The touch of your hand and mine,

Which means far more to the fainting heart

Than shelter and bread and wine;

For shelter is gone when the night is o'er,

And bread lasts only a day

But the touch of the hand and the sound of the voice

Sing on in the soul always.

I Will Act Now

My dreams are worthless, my plans are dust, my goals are impossible. All are of no value unless they are followed by action.

I will act now. Never has there been a map, however carefully executed to detail and scale, which carried its owner over even one inch of ground. Action, alone, is the tinder which ignites the map ... my dreams, my plans, my goals, into a living force. Action is the food and drink which will nourish my success.

I will act now. My procrastination which has held me back was born of fear and now I recognize this secret mined from the depths of all courageous hearts. Now I know that to conquer Life I must always act without hesitation and the flutters in my heart will vanish. Now I know that action reduces the lion of terror to an act of equanimity.

I will act now!

If

If you can trust yourself though others
doubt you
And conquer fears that limit what you dare
So you can then enrich the world about
you
With skills and talents that are yours to
share;

If you enjoy quiet introspection
And festive times with friends and family,
If you make time for dreaming and
reflection
But still find joy in others' company;

If you can balance dreams with practicality
And deal in facts but never lose ideals,
If you can face the harshness of reality
And find that truths that prejudice
conceals;

If you can be courageous when defeated
And humble in the face of victory
Or give your best until a task's completed,
However difficult that task may be;

If a Child Lives With...

If a child lives with:

- * Criticism, he learns to condemn;
- * Hostility, he learns to fight;
- * Ridicule, he learns to be shy;
- * Shame, he learns to feel guilty.

If Each Note of Music

If each note of music were to say,
"One note does not make a symphony"
There would be no symphony

If each word were to say,
"One word does not make a book"
There would be no book

If each brick were to say,
"One brick does not make a wall"
There would be no wall

If you can be sincere when giving credit
And work at building bridges and not walls
Or strive to reach a prize until you get it,
Yet never fail to help someone who falls...

If you can temper facts with understanding
And manage well the things in your control
And neither be too lax nor too demanding
But keep in mind the worth of every soul;

If you can reach objectives, not
begrudging
The patience, time, and effort you impart,
And look at other's actions without judging
And see not with just your eyes but with
your heart;

If you can take resources that surround
you
And use them in the way you feel is good,
You'll be successful...and all those around
you
Will be the richer for your brotherhood.

But if a child lives with:

- * Tolerance, he learns to be patient;
- * Praise, he learns to appreciate;
- * Fairness, he learns justice;
- * Security, he learns to have faith;
- * Approval, he learns to like himself;
- * Acceptance and friendship,
- * He learns to find love in the world.

If each drop of water were to say,
"One drop does not make an ocean"
There would be no ocean

If each seed were to say,
"One seed does not make a field of corn"
There would be no harvest

If each one of us were to say,
"One act of love cannot save mankind"
There would be no justice or peace

If the Earth...

If the Earth were only a few meters in diameter, floating a few meters above a field somewhere, people would come from everywhere to marvel at it. People would walk around it, marveling at its big pools of water, its little pools, and the water flowing between the pools. People would marvel at the bumps on it and the holes in it, and they would marvel at the very thin layer of gas surrounding it and the water suspended in the gas. The people would marvel at all the creatures walking around the surface of the ball and at the creatures in the water.

The people would declare it as sacred because it was the only one, and they would protect it so that it would not be hurt. The ball would be the greatest wonder known, and people would come to pray to it, to be healed, to gain knowledge, to know beauty, and to wonder how it could be. People would love it and defend it with their lives because they would somehow know that their lives, their own roundness, could be nothing without it. If the Earth were only a few meters in diameter...

If There Is To Be Peace

If there is to be peace in the world,
There must be peace in the nations.

If there is to be peace between neighbors,
There must be peace in the home.

If there is to be peace in the nations,
There must be peace in the cities.

If there is to be peace in the home,
There must be peace in the heart.

If there is to be peace in the cities,
There must be peace between neighbors.

I'd Rather Be

I'd rather be a "Could Be"
If I couldn't be an "Are"
For a "Could Be" is a "May Be"
With a chance of reaching par.

I'd rather be a "Has Been"
Than a "Might Have Been" by far;
For a "Might Have Been" has never been,
But a "Has Been" was once an "Are"

I'm Proud to Be Me, You're Proud to Be You

I'm proud to be me, but I also see
You're just as proud to be you
We may look at things a bit differently
But lots of good people do.

I'm proud to be me, but I also see
You're just as proud to be you
Tis true, you're just as proud to be you.

Its just Human nature, so why should I
hate you
For being as Human as I
We'll live and let live and we'll get as we
give
And we'll all get along if we try

I'm Special

I'm Special.

No one looks like me, thinks acts or does anything like me.

I am unique.

No one has the talents I have, no one feels like I do or reacts like I do.

I'm special.

Since this is so, and I'm special, then there must be a purpose for me, something in this life that *I* can do that no one else can.

I have a place, a special calling---because I'm special.

I need to think about what it might be.

In the Wind

In the wind and the rain and the sea is release;

In the field and the forest I find my peace;

In solitude, musing, I discover my soul;

By the love in friendships, I am again made whole.

Indian Blessing of the Four Winds

O Great Spirit:

Bless us from the North with the cool winds that calm our passions

Bless us from the East with the winds that bring and renew life

Bless us from the South with the warm wet winds that invite growth

Bless us from the West with the winds that lead us through this life to the next

Fill the sky so that we may sense Your presence

And bless us from Mother Earth from which we have come and to whom we shall return.

Iroquois Prayer

O Great Spirit, whose voice I hear in the winds and whose breath gives life to the world, hear me.

I come to you as one of your many children. I am small and weak. I need your strength and your wisdom.

May I walk in beauty. Make my eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset. Make my hands respect the things that you have made and my ears sharp to hear your voice.

Make me wise so that I may know the things you have taught your children, the lessons you have hidden in every leaf and rock.

Make me strong, not to be superior to my brothers and sisters, but to be able to conquer my greatest enemy, myself.

Make me ever ready to come to You with straight eyes, so that when life fades as the fading sunset, my spirit comes to You without shame.

-- Chief Dan George

It Couldn't Be Done

Somebody said that it couldn't be done,
But he with a chuckle replied
That maybe it couldn't but he would be
one
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.
So he buckled right in with a trace of a
grin
On his face; if he worried, he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

Somebody scoffed: "Oh, you'll never do
that;
As least, no one has ever done it."
But he took off his coat and he took off his
hat,

And the first thing he knew he'd begun it.
With a lift of the chin and a bit of a grin.
Without any doubting or 'quiddit',
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done ... and he did it!

There are thousands to tell you it cannot
be done.
There are thousands to prophesy failure;
There are thousands to point out to you,
one by one,
The dangers that await to assail you.
But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,
Just take off your coat and go to it;
Just start to sing as you tackle the thing
That 'cannot be done' and you'll do it.

Lesson from the Geese

Have you ever wondered why migrating geese fly in V formation? As with most animal behavior, it shows us a valuable principle of mutual aid. As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird following. By flying in their V-group formation, the whole flock adds more flying range than if each bird flew alone.

When a goose falls out of foundation, it suddenly feels the resistance and quickly gets back in to take advantage of that lifting power of the bird immediately in front.

When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into formation and another goose flies at the point. The geese in formation honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

When a goose gets sick, wounded, or shot down, two others drop out of formation and follow to help and protect. They stay until the ailing member is either able to fly again or dies. Then they launch out, either on their own, with another group, or to catch up with the flock.

Lessons You Learned

For every petal you pluck from a daisy,
You've granted one measure of love.
For every rainbow you find with two ends,
I wish you two stars from above.

For every tear you brush from a cheek,
I promise you kindness will follow.
Wherever you walk, under rainbows or
stars,
Over daisies, or down lonely hollow.

For every child you play with and talk to,
I grant you one heart full of laughter.
For every smile you place on a face,
I promise you peace ever after.

If you think "I" am giving you priceless
gifts,
Look close at yourself and your deeds.
The gifts you earned were the lessons you
learned.
While answering other folks' needs.

Life

Life isn't about keeping score.
It's not about how many friends you have
Or how accepted you are.
Not about if you have plans this weekend or if you're alone.
It isn't about who you're dating, who you used to date, how many people you've dated,
or if you haven't been with anyone at all.
It isn't about who you have kissed,
It's not about sex.
It isn't about who your family is or how much money they have
Or what kind of car you drive.
Or where you are sent to school.
It's not about how beautiful or ugly you are.
Or what clothes you wear, what shoes you have on, or what kind of music you listen to.
It's not about if your hair is blonde, red, black, or brown
Or if your skin is too light or too dark.
Not about what grades you get, how smart you are, how smart everybody else thinks
you are, or how smart standardized tests say you are.
It's not about what clubs you're in or how good you are at "your" sport.
It's not about representing your whole being on a piece of paper and seeing who will
"accept the written you."

Life just isn't.

But, life is about who you love and who you hurt.
It's about who you make happy or unhappy purposefully.
It's about keeping or betraying trust.
It's about friendship, used as a sanctity or a weapon.
It's about what you say and mean, maybe hurtful, maybe heartening.
About starting rumors and contributing to petty gossip.
It's about what judgments you pass and why. And who your judgments are spread to.
It's about who you've ignored with full control and intention.
It's about jealousy, fear, ignorance, and revenge.
It's about carrying inner hate and love, letting it grow, and spreading it.
But most of all, it's about using your life to touch or poison other people's hearts in such
a way that could have never occurred alone.
Only you choose the way those hearts are affected, and those choices are what life's all
about.

Life is Risk

To laugh is to risk appearing a fool.
To weep is to risk being called sentimental.
To reach out to another is to risk involvement.
To expose feelings is to risk showing your true self.
To place your ideas and dreams before the crowd is to risk being called naive.
To love is to risk not being loved in return.
To live is to risk dying.

To hope is to risk despair, and to try is to risk failure. But risks must be taken, because the greatest risk in life is to risk nothing. The person who risks nothing, does nothing, has nothing, is nothing, and becomes nothing.

They may avoid suffering and sorrow but they simply cannot learn and feel and change and grow and love and live. Chained by things that are certain, they are slavea. They have forfeited their freedom. Only the person who risks is truly free.

Like a Spider's Web

Peace is like a spider's web,
Vulnerable yet indestructible;
Tear it and it will be rewoven;
Peace does not despair.
Begin to weave a web of peace;
Start in the center
And make peace with yourself
And your God;

Take the thread outwards
And build peace within your family,
Your community,
And in the circle include those you find
hard to like;
Then stretch your concern into all the
world.
Weave a web of peace and do not despair.

Look To This Day

Look to this day
for yesterday is but a dream
and tomorrow is only a vision
but today, well lived,

makes every yesterday a dream of
happiness
and every tomorrow a vision of hope
look well, therefore, to this day

The Most Beautiful Flower

The park bench was deserted as I sat down to read
Beneath the long, straggly branches of an old willow tree.
Disillusioned by life with good reason to frown,
For the world was intent on dragging me down.

And if that weren't enough to ruin my day,
A young boy out of breath approached me, all tired from play.
He stood right before me with his head tilted down
And said with great excitement, "Look what I found!"

In his hand was a flower, and what a pitiful sight,
With its petals all worn - not enough rain, or too little light.
Wanting him to take his dead flower and go off to play,
I faked a small smile and then shifted away.

But instead of retreating he sat next to my side
And placed the flower to his nose and declared with overacted surprise,
"It sure smells pretty and it's beautiful, too.
That's why I picked it; here, it's for you."

The weed before me was dying or dead.
Not vibrant of colors, orange, yellow or red.
But I knew I must take it, or he might never leave.

So I reached for the flower, and replied, "Just what I need."

But instead of him placing the flower in my hand,
He held it mid-air without reason or plan.
It was then that I noticed for the very first time
That weed-toting boy could not see: he was blind.

I heard my voice quiver, tears shone like the sun
As I thanked him for picking the very best one.
"You're welcome," he smiled, and then ran off to play,
Unaware of the impact he'd had on my day.

I sat there and wondered how he managed to see
A self-pitying woman beneath an old willow tree.
How did he know of my self-indulged plight?
Perhaps from his heart, he'd been blessed with true sight.

Through the eyes of a blind child, at last I could see
The problem was not with the world; the problem was me.
And for all of those times I myself had been blind,
I vowed to see the beauty in life, and appreciate every second that's mine.

And then I held that wilted flower up to my nose
And breathed in the fragrance of a beautiful rose
And smiled as I watched that young boy, another weed in his hand
About to change the life of an unsuspecting old man.

Night Way

In beauty may I walk. All day long may I walk.
Through the returning seasons may I walk. Beautifully will I possess again.
Beautifully birds... Beautifully joyful birds...
On the trail marked with pollen may I walk. With grasshoppers about my feet may I walk.
With dew about my feet may I walk. With beauty may I walk.
With beauty before me may I walk. With beauty behind me may I walk.
With beauty above me may I walk. With beauty all around me may I walk.
In old age wandering on a trail of beauty, lively, may I walk.
In old age wandering on a trail of beauty, living again, may I walk.
It is finished. May you walk in beauty."
-- Traditional Navajo prayer

One-liners

You can't get much done by starting tomorrow.
It is better to look ahead and prepare, than to look back and regret.
Be happy - it is one way of being wise.
Kindness is the ability to love people more than they deserve.
Practice makes perfect, so be careful what you practice.
Keep your ideals high enough to inspire you, and low enough to encourage you.

You can't just turn back the clock, but you can wind it up again.
If you have joy in your heart, it will be known by the look on your face.
A friend is one who knows our faults, yet finds our virtues too.
A hint is something we often drop but rarely pick up.
Perhaps you can't be a star, but you need not be a cloud.
The best gift - forgiveness.
Have faith in what you believe and don't give up on the future.
He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.

Parable of the Rose

A certain person planted a rose and watered it faithfully and before it blossomed, examined it. The bud that would soon blossom was present, but also noticed were thorns upon the stem and the person thought, "How can a flower of any value come from a plant burdened with so many sharp thorns?" Saddened by this thought, the rose was neglected, and before it was ready to bloom, it died.

So it is with many people. Within every soul there is a rose. The highest qualities planted within us at birth grow amid the thorns of our faults. Many of us look at ourselves and see only the thorns, the defects. We despair, thinking that nothing good can possibly come from us. We neglect to nurture the good within us, and eventually it dies. We never realize our potential.

Some people do not see the rose within themselves; frequently, someone else must show it to them. One of the greatest gifts a person can possess is to be able to reach past the thorns and discover the rose within others.

This is a characteristic of love---to look at a person and know their true worth---accepting that person into your life, while recognizing the nobility within them. Help them to realize that they can overcome their faults. If we show them the rose, they will conquer their thorns. Only then will they blossom many times over. Within every soul there is a rose ...

Prayer for Camp

Lord, give us strength and patience to suffer the trials and problems of the coming day; to forgive the mistakes of those at their first camp; to comfort those who feel homesick; to be friendly to each other when tempers fray; to accept criticism when offered in a constructive manner; to make the best of our time, whatever the weather; to try to uphold the Scout Laws in all we do.

- adapted from a prayer by the 4th Feltham Troop patrol leaders

Press On

Nothing in the World can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan "Press on," has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race.

---Calvin Coolidge

The Road Goes Ever On and On

The Road goes ever on and on
Down from the door where it began.
Now far ahead the road has gone,
And I must follow, if I can,
---J.R.R Tolkien

Pursuing it with eager feet,
Until it joins some larger way
Where many paths and errands meet.
And whither then? I cannot say.

The Rules for Being Human

You will receive a body. You may like it or hate it, but it will be yours for the entire period.

You will learn lessons. You are enrolled in a full-time informal school, called Life. Each day in this school you will have the opportunity to learn lessons. You may like the lessons or think them irrelevant and stupid.

There are no mistakes, only lessons. Growth is a process of trial and error: experimentation. The "failed" experiments are as much a part of the process as the experiment that ultimately "works."

A lesson is repeated until learned. A lesson will be presented to you in various forms until you have learned it. When you have learned it, you can then go on to the next lesson. Learning lessons does not end. There is no part of Life that does not contain its lessons. If you are alive, there are lessons to be learned.

"There" is no better than "here." When your "there" has become a "here," you will simply obtain another "there" that will, again, look better than "here."

Others are merely mirrors of you. You cannot love or hate something about another person unless it reflects something you love or hate about yourself.

What you make of your life is up to you. You have all the tools and resources you need. What you do with them is up to you. The choice is yours.

Your answers to life's questions lie inside you. All you need to do is look, listen, and trust.

Rules of Thumb

Taken from *Life's Little Instruction Book, Volume II* written by H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

1. When you feel terrific, notify your face.
2. Love deeply and passionately. You might get hurt, but it's the only way to live life completely.
3. Never take the last piece of fried chicken.
4. Never betray a confidence.
5. Don't expect your love alone to make a neat person out of a messy one.
6. Never say anything uncomplimentary about another person's dog.
7. Remember that everyone you meet is afraid of something, loves something, has lost something.
8. When opportunity knocks, invite it to stay for dinner.

9. Use your past successes as a trampoline, not an easy chair.
10. Never lose your nerve, your temper, or your car keys.
11. Don't let weeds grow around your dreams.
12. Never interrupt when you are being flattered.
13. Let some things remain mysterious.
14. Never be ashamed of laughter that's too loud or singing that's too joyful.
15. Every now and then, bite off more than you can chew.
16. When there's a piano to be moved, don't pick up the stool.
17. Be gentle with the earth.

Seven Steps to Stagnation

1. It's never been done that way.
2. We're not ready for that, yet.
3. We're doing fine without it.
4. We've tried that before, and it didn't work out.
5. It costs too much.
6. That's not our responsibility/We're not authorized to do it.
7. Experts say it won't work.

She, in Candlelight, Glows

There was a child standing outside, alone.
She was absorbed into the wall surrounding her.
By chance someone saw here there, saw her need, and stopped to light her candle,
And she, in candlelight, glows.

There was a child without confidence.
She was afraid to try, worried about rejection.
Someone lit her candle with a smile,
A nodding of praise for her efforts,
And she, in candlelight, glows.

There was a child who couldn't be still.
She bounced and bubbled and never came to rest.
Someone filled her eyes with awe, and she saw
A gift of light, and emotions quieted her soul,
And she, in candlelight, glows.

There was a child searching for meaning.
Looking for direction that made sense to her.
Someone lit a candle to help her find a way,
With a Promise, a song, and a prayer,
And she, in candlelight, glows.

There was a child seeing a need in the world.
She didn't know what to do that would help.
Someone showed her a little light, flickering.
She lit the candles of others,
And she, in candlelight, glows.

So Many worlds to Explore

There are so many worlds to explore,
All you have to do is open the door,
And let your spirit soar.

There's a world of yourself when you're
all alone,
There's a world of yourself when you're
just at home.
There's a world of friends so true,
And there's a worlds of others too.

But the world that is best is the out-of-
doors,

For you never know just what's in store,
There's beauty, rest and solitude,
To fill your heart with gratitude.

Of the things that make the world so
nice,
The birds and the trees are just a slice,
Of what makes people sacrifice,
To make this world a paradise.

There are so many worlds to explore,
All you have to do is open the door,
And let your spirit soar.

So Much Good

There is so much good in the worst of us,
And so much bad in the best of us,

That it hardly becomes any of us
To criticize the rest of us.

Success

To Laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded.

-- Ralph Waldo Emerson -

Take Time

Take time to work;
It is the price of success:
Take time to think;
It is the source of power:
Take time to read;
It is the foundation of knowledge:
Take time to give to others;
It will bring you happiness:

Take time to love;
It is the sacrament of life:
Take time to dream;
It hitches the soul to the stars;
Take time to laugh;
It lightens the highway to eternal life:
Take time to plan,
And you will have time for all the rest.

Tao

There is a secret to Tao, that all life has an inner nature. Everything does it's own thing well. Bees sting. Trees grow. Air is fluid. Stars explode. Everything has its own purpose and life is a chaotic interaction of all these things. Here is a story to illustrate the point:

Hui-tse said to Chuang-tse, "I have a large tree which no carpenter can make into lumber. Its branches and trunk are crooked and tough, covered with bumps and depressions. No builder would turn his head to look at it. Your teachings are the same--- useless, without value. Therefore, no one pays attention to them"

"As you know," Chuang-tse replied, "a cat is very skilled at capturing its prey. Crouching low, it can leap in any direction, pursuing whatever it is after. But when its attention is focused on such things, it can be easily caught with a net. On the other hand, a huge yak is not easily caught or overcome. It stands like a stone, or a cloud in the sky. But for all its strength, it cannot catch a mouse.

"You complain that your tree is not valuable as lumber. But you could make use of the shade it provides, rest under its sheltering branches, and stroll beneath it, admiring its character and appearance. Since it would not be endangered by an axe, what could threaten its existence? It is useless to you only because you want to make it into something else and do not use it in its proper way."

The point of the story is that everything has a place in life and does what is expected. Life is as it is. Do good because it is your inner nature to be kind and helpful, not because someone else tells you it's the correct thing to do.

Quietly live your life enjoying what is out there for yourself. And when you do things, do them for yourself and take responsibility everything you do, good and bad. Just remember: follow your inner nature; what is inside you cannot lead you wrong.

This Sacred Earth---A Plea for Preservation

Europeans came in great numbers to settle the Puget Sound area of Washington State beginning in the mid 19th century. From 1851, the United States Government entered into negotiations with the native tribes of the area to sell them land. Among the most preeminent of negotiators was the leader of the Suquamish and Duwamish peoples, Chief Seattle (in whose honor the City of Seattle is named). His words, addressed to President Franklin Pierce, were taken down as translator's notes by frontier doctor and would-be poet, Henry Smith. In the 1970s, Dr. Smith's text, published in 1887, was fashioned to a script by Ted Perry and introduced to world audiences in an ABC television documentary called "Home". Here is Chief Seattle's compelling message on preserving the environment, from Perry's script:

The President in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land. But how can you buy or sell the sky? The land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them? Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every meadow, every humming insect. All are holy in the memory and experience of my people.

We know the sap which courses through the trees as we know the blood that courses through our veins. We are part of the earth and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters. The bear, the deer, the great eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the juices in the meadow, the body heat of the pony, and man, all belong to the same family.

The shining water that moves in the streams and rivers is not just water, but the blood of our ancestors. If we sell you our land, you must remember that it is sacred. Each ghostly reflection in the clear waters of the lakes tells of events and memories in the life

of my people. The water's murmur is the voice of my father's father. The rivers are our brothers. They quench our thirst. They carry our canoes and feed our children. So you must give to the rivers the kindness you would give any brother.

If we sell you our land, remember that the air is precious to us, that the air shares its spirit with all the life it supports. The wind that gave our grandfather his first breath also receives his last sigh. The wind also gives our children the spirit of life. So if we sell you our land, you must keep it apart and sacred, as a place where people can go taste the wind that is sweetened by the meadow flowers.

Will you teach your children what we have taught our children? That the earth is our mother? What befalls the earth befalls all the people of the earth. This we know: the earth does not belong to man, man belongs to the earth. All things are connected like the blood that unites us all. Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

One thing we know: our god is also your god. The earth is precious to him and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its creator.

Your destiny is a mystery to us. What will happen when the buffalo are all slaughtered? The wild horses tamed? What will happen when the secret corners of the forest are heavy with the scent of many men and the view of the ripe hills is blotted by talking wires? Where will the thicket be? Gone! Where will the eagle be? Gone! And what is it to say goodbye to the swift pony and the hunt? The end of living and the beginning of survival.

When the last Red Man has vanished with his wilderness and his memory is only the shadow of a cloud moving across the prairie, will these shores and forests still be here? Will there be any of the spirit of my people left?

We love this earth as a newborn loves its mother's heartbeat. So, if we sell you our land, love it as we have loved it. Care for it as we have cared for it. Hold in your mind the memory of the land as it is when you received it. Preserve the land for all children and love it, as God loves us all.

As we are part of the land, you too are part of the land. This earth is precious to us. It is also precious to you. One thing we know: there is only one God. No man, be he Red Man or White Man, can be apart. We are brothers and sisters after all."

To Be The Best

Now as I start upon my chosen way,
In all I do, My thoughts, my work, my
play,
Grant as I promise, courage new for me,
To be the best, the best that I can be.

Help me to think of others as I should,
That I may do my daily turn of good,
May I be ready, waiting for each need,
And keep me clean in thought and word
and deed.

Help me to keep my Honour shining bright,
May I be loyal in the hardest fight,
Let me be able for my task, and then
To earn a place among my sisters again.

Now as I journey on my chosen way,
In all I do, my thoughts, my work, my
play,
Grant as I promise, courage new for me
To be the best, the **BEST** that I can be.

Tolerance

The most precious attribute that you can have as a citizen is the capacity to see that your truth is not the only truth, that your faith is not higher than your neighbor's, and that your sense of yourself need not be enriched by denigrating others who are different from you.

Torch for the world

There burns a torch in every heart,
The torch of friendship true,
Its flame unites the world o'er,
The far, the near, the old, the new.
It kindles a fire of strong desire
To learn, to love, to live,
To try the best that one can try,
To give the most that one can give.
Not always was this great flame thus,
It was at first a spark.
- from the GGC campfire activities book.

It grew, and rose to glorious heights
And pierced the lonely dark.
Its smoke continues to the sky,
Bearing a wish from every place,
That we may ever live in peace,
And cherish every race.
Lift high the torch of friendship, then,
As with true Guides we stand [Scouts]
A body pledged to high ideals,
As guardians of the land.

The Touch of the Master's Hand

Twas battered and scarred and the
auctioneer
thought it scarcely worth his while
to waste more time with the old violin.
But he held it up with a smile.
'What am I bid, good folks', he cried,
'Who'll start the bidding for me?
A dollar, a dollar', then 'Two!' 'Only two?
Two dollars and who'll make it three?
Three dollars once, three dollars twice,
going for three'
But no ...
From the room far back, a gray-haired
man
Came forward and picked up the bow.

Then wiping the dust from the old violin,
And tightening the loose strings,
He played a melody pure and sweet
As sweet as a caroling angel sings.
The music ceased, and the auctioneer
In a voice that was quiet and low,
Said 'What am I bid for the old violin?'
And he held it up with the bow.
'A thousand dollars, and who'll make it
two?'
'Two thousand!' 'And who'll make it three?'
'Three thousand once, three thousand
twice,
And going and gone!' said he.

The people cheered, but some of them
cried,
'We do not quite understand.
What changed its worth?' Swift came the
reply,
'The touch of the master's hand.'

And many a man with life out of tune,
And battered and scarred with sin,
Is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless
crowd,

Much like the old violin.
A mess of pottage, a glass of wine
A game---and he travels on.
He's 'going once' and 'going twice'
He's going and almost gone.
But the Master comes, and the foolish
crowd,
Never can quite understand
The worth of a soul, and the change that is
wrought
By the touch of the Master's hand.

The Traveler and the Tracker

Once a Traveler and a Tracker set out to explore the world together. As they wound their way through the wilderness, the Traveler was amazed at the Tracker's habit of pausing several times a day to pray.

"Why do you pray to something intangible?" the Traveler asked. "How do you know there is a God?"

Now the Tracker was very skilled in noticing things and, through the years, had gained much insight reading the smallest signs. And he answered the Traveler this way:

"I know there is a God when I see the leaves turning yellow. I know there is a God when a trout jumps at a fly, and when grass waves in the dry wind. I know there is a God when clouds shade my head and the stars wink at night."

"So you see," said the Tracker, "I know there is a God, for I can see his footprints throughout the Universe."

Traveler at the Gate

A traveler reached the gates of a city one night and knocked at the gate. The gatekeeper answered and the traveler asked, "I need a place to stay. What are people like in your city?" The gatekeeper replied, "What are people like in your home city?" "Stingy, mean and unkind to strangers," replied the traveler. "Well, we're just the same here," replied the gatekeeper. So the traveler continued walking.

Later, another traveler appeared at the gate and the gatekeeper answered. The traveler asked about the local people and the gatekeeper replied, "What are people like in your home city?" "Generous, kind and hospitable to strangers," replied the traveler. "Well, we're just same here," replied the gatekeeper. "And you're welcome to stay the night here."

The True Peace

The first peace, which is the most important, is that which comes within the souls of people when they realize their relationship, their oneness, with the universe and all its powers, and when they realize that, at the center of the universe dwells God, and that

this center is really everywhere; it is within each of us. This is the real peace, and the others are but reflections of this.

The second peace is that which is made between two individuals, and the third is that which is made between two nations. (But) there can never be peace between nations until there is first known that true peace ... within the souls of people.

-- Black Elk, Shaman of the Lakota Nation

Truth is One

Truth is one: sages call it through various names,
It is the one sun who reflects in all the ponds,
It is the one water which slakes the thirst of all;
It is the one air which sustains all life;
It is the one fire which shines in all houses;
Colors of the cows may be different, but honey is the same;
Systems of faith may be different,
But truth is one.

As the rain dropping from the sky wends its way towards the ocean,
So the prostrations offered in all faiths reach the one.

The one who is supreme.

Wander Thirst

Yonder the blue horizon lies,
And there by night and day,
The old ships come to port again,
The young ones sail away.

And there's no end of wandering,
When once the voice is heard;
The river calls, the road calls,
And oh! the call of a bird.

I know not where the white road bends
Nor what the blue hills are,
But I can have the sun for a friend
And for my guide a star.

And if you should ask me,
I could not tell you why;
But you can blame it on
The white road, the blue hills, and the sky.

We look about us

[Useful in an open setting Scouts Own, use surroundings to fill out the lines, take your time and encourage the Scouts to look about themselves.]

We look about us ... and see the grass and trees ...
We look about us ... and see the blue sky and crystal waters ...
We look about us ... and see the birds and animals that live in this world with us ...
We look about us ... and see the camp where we have had so much fun
We look about us ... and see our brothers (and sisters) in Scouting ...
We look about us ... and see God's Hand everywhere ...
We look about us ...

What is Fair?

Whenever we say, "It's not fair",
We should remember those who have nothing to eat;

Whenever we say, "It's not fair",
We should remember those who sleep in the street;
Whenever we say, "It's not fair",
We should remember those in the middle of a war;
Whenever we say, "It's not fair",
We should remember those who are sick and poor.
Lord, help us to remember how lucky we are
And not to say, "It's not fair."

What One...

What One Hears---One Forgets;
What One Sees---One Remembers;
What One Does---One Knows!

When Night Ends

"How can we determine the hour of dawn---when the night ends and the day begins?"
the wise woman asked of her students.

"When, from a distance, you can distinguish between a dog and a sheep?" one of her
students suggested.

"No", the wise one answered.

"Is it when you can distinguish between an oak tree and a grapevine?" another student
asked.

"No" she replied.

"Please tell us the answer, then" said the students.

"It is when you can look into the face of a human being and have enough light to
recognize in him your brother," the wise teacher replied.

"Until then, it is night, and the darkness is still with us."

When You Are...

When you are depressed, exhausted, frustrated, and disillusioned, remember it is the
crushed grape that yields the wine.

Why Lord?

Why Lord, do so many people waste their time
Hoping, praying and wishing for things to change for the better;
Wanting their children to have a better world,
A drug-free life of love and peace, and fresh air?
Why do they do this Lord while they sit back and help it decay?

When You Walk Through The Woods

When you walk through the woods,
I want you to see ...

The floating gold of a bumble bee,
Rivers of sunlight, pools of shade
Toadstools sleeping in mossy jade
A cobweb net with a catch of dew
Treetop cones against the blue

Dancing flowers, bright green flies
And birds that put rainbows in your eyes.

When you walk through the woods,
I want you to hear ...

A million sounds in your eager ear
The scratch and rattle of wind-tossed trees

The rush as a timid chipmunk flees
The cry of a hawk from the distant sky
The purr of leaves when a breeze rolls by
Brooks that mumble, stones that ring
And birds that teach your heart to sing.

When you walk through the woods,
I want you to feel ...

That no mere human could make this real
Could paint the throb of a butterfly's wing
Could teach a wood thrush how to sing
Could create these wonders of earth and
sky
There's something greater than you or I.
When you walk through the woods
and the birches nod

Who is Disabled

If you fail to see the person but only the disability, then, who is blind?
If you cannot hear your brother's cry for justice, who is deaf?
If you do not communicate with your sister but separate her from you, who is disabled?
If your heart and your mind do not reach out to your neighbor, who has the handicap?
If you do not stand up for the rights of all persons, who is the cripple?
Our attitudes towards persons with disabilities may be our biggest handicap, and yours too.

From the booklet "Eagles Soaring High", available from Philmont Scout Ranch, Cimarron, NM. It is written for use in worship on the trails there.

Call to Worship

Leader: This is the day the Lord has made.
All: Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Hymn (see suggested list below)

Prayer (in unison) God, our Father, we thank you for the beauty of the earth, for the food we eat and for the comforts we enjoy. Help us to love others more, to be concerned with the problems of our day, and to understand Your will in our actions. Grant us the strength to live wisely and well, to be worthy users of Your creation and ready and willing workers for the causes of goodness.

Scripture (Hebrews 10:22-25) [Today's English Version]

"So let us come near to God with a sincere heart and a sure faith, with hearts that have been purified from a guilty conscience and with bodies washed with clean water. Let us hold on firmly to the hope we profess, because we can trust God to keep His promise. Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good. Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another all the more, since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming nearer."

Meditation/Reflection (you may read a meditation from "Eagles Soaring High" or any other daily devotional or choose to share reflections. One possibility from "Eagles Soaring High" is listed after the Hymn suggestions in case time has not allowed you to pick out something appropriate ahead of time.)

Prayers of the People (Spontaneous Prayer from participants)

Hymn (see suggested list below)

Blessing: Let us go forth with God's blessing to serve Him in joy and gladness.

Suggested Hymns:

On Eagles Wings
The Church's One Foundation
Amazing Grace
O God, Our Help in Ages Past
This is My Father's World
Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow
Do Lord
How Great Thou Art
God Bless America
Kum Ba Yah (either original or Scout Law version)

A Possible Meditation/Reflection:

"He traveled on the wings of the wind" (II Samuel 22:11 and Psalm 18:10)

These words are from a song that King David sang to his Lord. We can often hear the wind moving through the pines and playing a soft melody. It is almost as if the trees were whispering to one another or to us below. Or as if God were playing a lullaby for us on His wind instrument.

The Lord touches all of His creation. He caresses the pines with His wind. He touches us with His love and forgiveness.

The "whispering pines" can become the sound in nature that reminds us of St. Paul's gentle words, "Be kind and tenderhearted to one another and forgive one another, as God has forgiven you through Christ." He who lives by forgiving and being forgiven lives in peace.

FOR REFLECTION: Is there someone whom you want to ask for forgiveness? Is there one whom you feel the need to forgive? (You may choose to share your thoughts with a friend or another Scout.)

PRAYER: Dear Father, where I have sinned, forgive me, and where I am afraid, quiet my fears. Amen.

The following service is also from Eagles Soaring High and is handy because by changing just a few things you could have a new service quickly.

CALL TO WORSHIP Eternal God, open my lips, that my mouth may declare Your glory.

OPENING SONG - AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties,
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood

From sea to shining sea.

O beautiful for patriot dream,
That sees beyond the years,
Thine alabaster cities gleam,
Undimmed by human tears.
America! America!

God shed His grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood

From sea to shining sea.

SCRIPTURE READING Psalm 8:3-9, Read Responsively

L= Leader S=Scouts

L: O God, our God, when I look at your heavens, the work of your hands, the moon and the stars which you created - who are we that you should be mindful of us, that you should care for us?

S: You have made us little less than the gods and crowned us with glory and honor. You have given us rule over the works of your hands, putting all things under our feet; all sheep and oxen, yes, and the beasts of the field; the birds of the air, the fishes of the sea, and whatever swims the paths of the seas.

ALL: God, our God, how glorious is your name over all the earth!

MEDITATION AND SHARING

Take a few moments now for personal silent reflection about how God works in creation and in your personal life. You may wish to share these reflections with your Troop.

PRAYER (Two different possibilities are given here, choose the one you prefer)

PRAYER FOR OUR COUNTRY

L: Let us pray together.

Our God and God of our ancestors, we ask Your blessing upon our country, on the leaders of our nation, and on all who exercise rightful authority in our community.

Unite the inhabitants of our country, whatever their origin and creed, into a bond of true friendship, to banish hatred and bigotry, and to safeguard our ideals and institutions of freedom.

May this land under Your Providence be an instrument for peace throughout the world.

ALL: AMEN

PRAYER OF THANKS L: Let us pray together.

We thank You, O God, for this day, for morning sun and evening star; for flowering of trees and flowing of streams, for life-giving rains and cooling breeze; for the earth's patient turning, the changing of the seasons, the cycle of growth and decay, of life and death. When our eyes behold the beauty and grandeur of your world, we see the wisdom, power and goodness of its Creator. We awake and, behold! It's a great day!

ALL: AMEN

CLOSING SONG (Two possibilities are given)

MORNING HAS BROKEN

Morning has broken like the first morning,
blackbird has spoken like the first bird.

Praise for the singing! Praise for the
morning!

Praise for them springing fresh from the
Word!

Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from
heaven,

like the first dewfall on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness of the wet
garden,
sprung in completeness where His feet
pass.

Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning!
Born of the one light Eden saw play!
Praise with elation, praise every morning,
God's recreation of the new day.

DAY IS DONE

Day is done, Gone the sun,
From the lake, From the hills, From the
sky,
All is well, Safely rest, God is nigh.

Thanks and Praise, For our days,
'Neath the sun, 'Neath the stars, 'Neath
the sky,
As we go, This we know, God is nigh.

BENEDICTION (Two possibilities are given)

THE FOUR WINDS BLESSING

O Great Spirit, Bless us from the north with the cool winds that calm our passions. Bless us from the east with the winds that bring and renew life. Bless us from the south with the warm wet winds that invit growth. Bless us from the west with the winds that lead us through this life to the next. Fill the sky so that we might sense your presence. And bless us from mother earth from which we've come and to whom we shall return.

GOD'S BLESSING

May God bless us and protect us;
May God show us favor and be gracious to us;
May God show us kindness and grant us peace.
AMEN

The following service is used by Troop 32 of Whitehall, PA and travels with them as one 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper printed on both sides and folded into a small booklet. The boys like the service, especially its basis in Scouting, American, and Native American themes.

A SCOUT IS REVERENT

This is my Father's world;
And to my listening ears,
All nature sings and around me rings,
The music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world;
I rest me in the thought,
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas;
His hand the wonders wrought.

This is my Father's world;
The birds their carols raise,
The morning light, the lily white,
Declare the maker's praise.
This is my father's world;
He shines in all that's fair.
In the rustling grass I hear him pass,
He speaks to me everywhere.

CALL TO WORSHIP

"Great Spirit, please come stay with us as we come together. Let all the earth keep silence in your presence.

OPENING PRAYER

O' Great Spirit, whose voice we hear in the winds and whose breath gives life to all the world, hear us! Let us walk in your beauty, and make our eyes ever behold the red and

purple sunset. Make our hands respect the things that you have made and our ears sharp to hear your voice.

Make us wise so that we may understand the things you have taught us. Let us learn the lessons you have hidden in every leaf and rock.

Make us always ready to come to you with clean hands and straight eyes.

And when life fades, as the fading sunset, may our spirits come to you without shame."
American Indian Prayer

READING (Unison) **THE 23rd PSALM**

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want;
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
He leads me besides still waters, He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no evil, for thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

HYMN Kum-by-ya

MESSAGE - "The Earth is Precious"

"You must teach your children that the ground beneath their feet is the ashes of your grandfathers. So that they will respect the land, tell your children that the earth is rich with the lives of our ancestors.

Teach your children what we have taught our children, that the earth is our mother. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected. This we know: the earth does not belong to one man; man belongs to the earth.

Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

This we know."
Chief Seattle

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Almighty God, You have given us this good land as our heritage. Make us always remember Your generosity and constantly do Your will. Bless our land with honest industry, truthful education, and an honorable way of life. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion; from pride and arrogance, and from every course of action. Make us who came from many nations with many different languages a united people. Defend our liberties and give those whom we have entrusted with the authority of government the spirit of wisdom, that there might be justice and peace in our land.

When times are prosperous, let our hearts be thankful; and, in troubled times, do not let our trust in you fail. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN

HYMN Amazing Grace

MESSAGE - "The Three Kinds of Peace"

"The first peace, which is the most important, is that which comes from within the souls of people. The second peace is that which is made between two individuals, and the third peace is that which is made between two nations.

(But) there can never be peace between nations until there is first known that true peace...within the souls of people."

Chief Luther Standing Bear

CLOSING MESSAGE

Is anyone happier because you passed this way?

Does anyone remember that you spoke to them today?

The day is almost over, and its toiling time is through;

Is there anybody to utter now a kindly word for you?

Can you say tonight in parting with the day that's slipping fast,

That you helped a single brother of the many that you passed?

Is a single heart rejoicing over what you did or said?

Does the Scout whose hopes are fading, now with courage look ahead?

Did you waste the day, or lose it?

Was it well or sorely spent?

Did you leave a trail of kindness, or a scar of discontent?

As you close your eyes in slumber, do you think that God will say.

"You have earned one more tomorrow by the work you did today?"

SCOUT VESPERS

THE LORD'S PRAYER (Unison)

SCOUT'S BENEDICTION (Unison)

And now, may the Great Master of all Scouts

Be with us 'til we meet again.

“The Book of Trees” Scout’s Own

Reader: Those of us who are here tonight are fortunate enough to have come in contact with the organization which believes in “doing our Best” Let us all imagine that we are in a great forest. The clearing through which all Scouts must enter is our ethical code. All who enter must make the Scout Promise. But once inside, we find many paths - all leading to a way of life on which we can build a wholesome future. In Scouting, we are able to help all Scouts take this trail.

Scout 1:Reading from the Book of Trees:

Scout 2:I am the Oak Tree - As sturdy and long-lived as I, so is a Scout’s honor.

Scout 3:I am the Holly Tree - Constantly green and holding tight to my leaves as a Scout is ever loyal.

Scout 4:I am a Birch Tree - With my bark and my wood, I am useful and help others as every Scout does.

Scout 5:I am a Linden Tree - My heart shaped leaves are like the hearts of Scouts who are friends to all and brothers to each other.

Scout 6:I am the Aspen Tree - My leaves softly whisper “Courtesy is Thoughtfulness” as every Scout knows.

Scout 7:I am the Elm Tree - Sheltering the little folk of the woods in my gracious branches and roots, I am a friend to all animals, just as every Scout.

Scout 8:I am the Poplar Tree - Tall and straight as a soldier who obeys orders, so does every Scout.

Scout 9:I am the Maple Tree - Brightening the spring, my leaves gay in the fall, I am as cheerful as a Scout.

Scout 10:I am a Hickory Tree - Tough of wood, I keep my nuts stored in strong, tight cases, just as a Scout is thrifty.

Scout 11:I am the Dogwood Tree - In the spring, I stand clean and beautiful in the face, as does a Scout, clean in thought, word and deed, so stands in beauty.

All: (The Outdoor Code) As an American, I promise to be clean in my outdoor manners, be careful with fire, and be considerate of the outdoors.

All: Sing “This Land is Your Land”